

SOLID WASTE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING TASK FORCE

OCTOBER 18, 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Curtis Binney (Chairman)
Mr. Lindell Dorsett
Mr. Dan Gorden
Mr. Richard Grier
Mr. Donald Taylor
Ms. Brenda Boggs
Ms. Chloe Gentry

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Commr. Welton Cadwell
Mr. Peter Tarby

OTHERS PRESENT

Mr. Sandy Minkoff, Interim County Manager
Ms. Wendy Taylor, Executive Office Manager, County Manager's Office
Mr. Jim Stivender, Public Works Director
Ms. Sarah Taitt, Assistant County Attorney
Ms. Susan Boyajan, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER, ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM, AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Curt Binney, Chairman, called the meeting to order and announced that they had properly noticed the meeting and that a quorum was established. He explained that due to a backup of work at the Clerk's Office, there were no minutes at this meeting to review.

COLLECTION/DISPOSAL FLOWCHART OF LAKE COUNTY

Mr. Stivender presented a summary chart with an explanation of how garbage is sorted and processed in Lake County in response to what the committee discussed at the last meeting. He stated that he could also develop one for how they would like to see the process done in the future or one to show how Sumter and Marion Counties process waste. He started by explaining that one day a week there is pickup for garbage only to go to the waste to energy, with the ash ending up at the landfill to be disposed of, and on another day of the week there was collection and disposal of waste, recycling, and yard waste. He pointed out the other residential drop-off centers that were throughout Lake County including Lady Lake, Loghouse in Clermont, and east Lake County. He mentioned that oversized items such as furniture containing a lot of wood are crushed and brought back to the waste to energy to burn. He pointed out on the diagram the explanation of what happens at the landfill, including 45,000 tons a year of waste to energy ash coming into the landfill site, and he noted that yard waste tends to be the

largest volume coming to the site to either be turned into mulch, transported to the waste energy plant for fuel, or put into the landfill. He stated that they process the recyclables and that they were doing a test this month on a MRF to improve the efficiency of the separation of some of the plastics to get a higher percentage return on that. He reported that currently the County's expenditure to dispose of leachate was lower because of the lack of rain. He also explained that they paid what they were required to get rid of certain hazardous waste, but some hazardous waste results in income for the County, such as the battery recycling program.

Mr. Dorsett inquired whether the tires ended up at Covanta.

Mr. Treshler responded that they were allowed to take 3 percent of the waste as tires, and he explained that tires have three times the heating value of other municipal solid waste, which would decrease their overall fuel rate and would necessitate higher tipping fees for them. He mentioned that tires are handled at a lot of wood waste processing facilities, and he did not believe that an excess of tires was a problem in Florida as it had been in the past. He related that they could petition that percentage to be larger if they wanted to.

Mr. Debo mentioned that in years past they used to process tires at the landfill and had equipment to cut them and pull the rims out before the waste tire grant money dried up that was used to pay the personnel and buy the equipment, so they have found disposal locations where they could take some of the approximately 500 tons of tires they received to be processed, such as Global in Wildwood. He also noted that tires had more and more uses in the landfill, such as an aggregate for leachate collection and material for floor covering and sidewalks, and some facilities used tires to generate electricity.

Mr. Bruna explained that the EPA has just mandated that cement kilns and other facilities that burn tires must meet the same incredibly strict burn requirements as hazardous waste incinerators, which means that they would have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to comply. He noted that a big portion of tires are going towards supplementary fuels for cement plants, which he opined was a great way of getting rid of tires. He also opined that they would probably end up exporting the tires so that other countries such as Mexico could make the cement and bring it to them cheaper than they could produce it here. He believed that Lake County would be paying much more to get rid of their tires in the next few years because of the strict requirements.

Mr. Treshler commented that there were enough renewable energy projects currently being funded in this state without any new ones, such as the 100 megawatt wood burning facility that GRU is putting in, which would require that 2 million tons a year of wood has to be cut in the Gainesville area, and an existing facility over by Jacksonville is vying for all the used tires in the state. He commented that those new renewable energy facilities already have to meet the new standards on their new permits.

Mr. Binney asked about the oversized furniture stream, such as chairs and mattresses and what happens to the refrigerators after they have been serviced and made safe.

Mr. Debo stated that the refrigerator is sold as scrap metal, and he explained that they do not have a Class 3 facility in Lake County, so they have to export that material after they crush it with their compactor and mechanically take as much material as possible out of that pile to either Class 3 landfills or to Covanta. He explained that Class 3 was a cleaner waste that still could degrade, but would not affect the groundwater, and some materials that were classified as Class 3 are construction debris, furniture, carpet, large tires, and wood waste. He commented that they did not want to use up their Class 1 airspace with that type of material, and it was also mentioned that the rules were getting more stringent on the long term care requirements and the lining of those landfills. He also noted that they limit the measurement of everything that goes to the incinerator to four feet and under and less than six inches in diameter.

Mr. Grier asked if a lot of the mulch goes to cover the ash at the landfill.

Mr. Debo answered that they do not need to necessarily do that, because they have been exempted from daily cover, but they were required by regulations to cover the garbage, so they reserve the ash to cover the buried and compacted garbage. He noted that they lose from 10 to 15 percent of their air space by using soil as a cover material, but by using ash they were not wasting any air space at all.

Mr. Minkoff related that they were working on a leachate system that will eliminate the need to separate the MSW and ash, and mixing that would not be a problem. He elaborated that a firm in Groveland was working on a system to reduce the volume of leachate separated into essentially distilled water that could be disposed of on site or even used for irrigation uses and a slushy residue that would be placed in sealed large plastic bags that would not leak and put back into the landfill. He added that even if it did leak, it would just mix with the rest of the leachate and be brought back out by their system. He stated that it was estimated that the cost would save the County significant amounts of money based on the way they were currently disposing of it, and he explained that the process was a very common process in industrial uses.

Mr. Treshler added that the problem with the leachate was not what was in the ash, but the organics that were in the raw municipal solid waste that caused treatment problems.

Mr. Stivender stated that they have done some calculations recently that indicated that the cell they currently were using at the landfill would be completed sometime at the end of 2011, and they would be moving into those other two cells.

Mr. Grier asked if the large amount of yard waste was going into the refuse stream and not being considered separate yard waste.

Mr. Debo responded that when they first started using the waste energy facility, they did not have the tonnage that they needed, so they collected yard waste that was bagged or cut up into bundled links less than four feet and 50 pounds with the household garbage to get burned in the incinerator. However, larger and bulkier yard waste has to go to the landfill to be processed.

Mr. Grier asked if they have ever looked at the possibility of composting the mulch that is made out of the yard waste at the landfill, since that would reduce the volume tremendously.

Mr. Debo noted that they have talked to the City of Eustis, who did that years ago, and he has been involved in some composting operations, but he pointed out that when they start getting into that kind of sludge, they were getting into Class A and B material, and the testing would be extensive.

Mr. Minkoff related that several of the County's cities engaged in composting to avoid paying the tipping fees to the County, but if they currently took yard waste out of the waste sent to Covanta, it would exacerbate their shortage of waste for the waste to energy plant, but that could change in 2014.

Mr. Grier commented that he would like to see them move toward a composting situation by 2014 and then do a separate yard waste pickup at the curb one day a week.

Mr. Minkoff stated that he thought that they would have a legal obligation per the legislature that composting could be part of their requirement if they went in another direction as they go forward, although they were probably exempt right now because of the waste energy plant.

Mr. Grier believed that if they meet the goals, there will be grants available from DEP to do things such as composting, and it would behoove them to meet those goals.

Mr. Debo noted that those goals are mandated by the legislature, but it was probably dropped down to a goal because there was no money available, although there were dates within the law that certain things have to be achieved. He had heard that Lake County was at 13 to 20 percent on their recycling rate, but the goal was 30 percent; however, if everything in the draft rules were counted, Lake County's recycling rate would jump to 86 percent.

Mr. Minkoff pointed out that the committee's job was to weigh the two sides to composting, which were the environmental advantages and the costs involved, and to come up with the recommendation to the Board.

Mr. Bruna related that Alachua County believes that they would be able to meet the goal of composting with just a program that they initiated a few years back that his division was looking at instituting sometime in the future, which was simple and inexpensive. He explained that the County buys truckloads of an earth machine that is plastic and looks like three-quarters of an egg; the organics are put at the top, and after a while they take the compost from the bottom. He opined that it worked beautifully, and the citizen would pay the cost of the item, which was about \$40. He pointed out that this method does not cost the county anything, does not involve huge facilities, and results in their meeting the requirements. He also suggested looking at the use of heaters that work on pellets or wood, which are allowed by law and used throughout the northeast and other small ways to comply rather than gravitate towards larger mega-facility programs.

Mr. Gorden asked what would change as far as processing waste if it was all taken to the landfill rather than to the waste to energy facility, such as the separating of yard waste.

Mr. Binney commented that one of the logical ways to handle this is to go through the chain from the curb and see where it could be diverted off into different issues, and at the next meeting he wanted to start discussing general municipal waste and different alternatives in each segment of the flow of the garbage.

Mr. Stivender explained that they probably would have done a lot of things differently without the Covanta contract, and if all that garbage had come to the landfill instead of Covanta, it would have resulted in 160 acres or a half-mile square pile of garbage. Also, he commented that since it was a huge volume reduction, they would have had to use another means of volume reduction.

Mr. Binney pointed out that they were looking at a new contract once the old one expires, and they were looking at some tough questions. He thought they should subtract out what they know would not be there in 2014, such as bonding, and make a forecast based on current numbers.

Mr. Minkoff explained that bonding is currently paid for by the capacity charge, which would be going away, and he clarified that the question would be whether they have a put or pay contract which would have the County guarantee a certain amount of tons or let it go with the market rather than where they dispose of waste, since the disposal methods would follow from that, and all of the methods of disposal will have their pros and cons. He specified that they would probably have to do put or pay if they wanted to lock in a long-term price, but they would probably not be able to get a long term price if they were willing to go with the market.

Mr. Grier asked if they let the market decide, could they find more sources of refuse to bring to Covanta to help make up for the loss, such as interlocal agreements with cities.

Mr. Minkoff responded that staff has mentioned Marion County as an option for that, but he commented that they had to find a way to keep their price competitive to persuade the cities to use the system.

Ms. Boggs asked if anyone has looked at the way that Palm Beach County's authority model was structured that allows them to take care of everyone's trash as one entity, which would guarantee them the trash. She explained that everyone within the county takes the trash to their main facility there, and everyone had the same recycling and education program.

Mr. Minkoff responded that they thought about that as an option if they went with the Heart of Florida group.

Mr. Binney pointed out that a large part of the committee's decision would be what they would do regarding moving forward with Covanta, and he was hearing that the existing contract was too expensive for a myriad of reasons, such as bonding and the put or pay issue. He believed that their decision would have to include consideration of some projected numbers and economic analysis to make an educated decision and to figure out whether it was economical for the citizens of Lake County to move forward or whether it was in the interest of the citizens to subsidize that if it was not.

Mr. Gorden noted that funding and the costs involved were a part of what they were commissioned to look at.

Mr. Stivender commented that there was a comfort level of price that goes with reducing the waste versus the cost of doing business, and one of the biggest challenges with Covanta that they discussed was the obligation of the tonnage.

Mr. Binney suggested that they project out two or three meetings in advance what they were going to cover to give staff some lead time to give the committee what they would need, and he stated that the goal was to be done by March 1.

Ms. Boggs suggested that the staff put together a chart illustrating the flow for electronic and metal waste, as well as one showing the cities and the commercial flow to show how they could work together.

Mr. Stivender pointed out that the electronic and metals would be included in the hazardous area on the chart that was presented today and that currently each city and commercial vendor handles waste a little differently.

Mr. Grier asked about the Heart of Florida arrangement.

Mr. Minkoff responded that Sumter County did not want to have any part of it, and Marion was still trying to figure out what they were doing. He stated that currently staff members of the counties comprising the group were meeting, but the elected officials have not met in many months.

OUTLINE OF MID-POINT COMMITTEE/CHAIRMAN REPORT

Mr. Binney noted that Resolution No. 2010-79 passed by the County Commission stated that this committee must make at least one interim report to the Board on or about December 1 which describes the progress of the Task Force and raises any issues that it has identified that should be brought to the Board. He related that they would start with the purpose, which would sum up the resolution, state what they were doing, and include a section on membership. He asked each member to provide biographical data to Ms. Wendy Taylor, Executive Office Manager, by the end of the week consisting of about two to three sentences which states who they were, what area of the County they were from, and what their experience was that related to this task force to be included in the report. He stated that they would break the report up into two phases, the Phase I portion which was the familiarization where the staff and others brought the members up to speed regarding how trash moves and how it was disposed of within the County and the Phase II portion which would be a summary of where they think they were going and their plan to get through March 1.

In response to concerns regarding water usage expressed in an e-mail from Dr. Ney, Mr. Treshler stated that Covanta already had their own wells onsite which were already metered and permitted until 2023 and that they did not need any additional ground water wells. He also pointed out that they were using less water now than they did several years ago because of the upgrade to the water treatment system

going to zero discharge, and they were using well below their allowable limits in their consumptive use permits. He added that in an effort to lower their demand on water, they were actually planning a sustainable program this year to put in a rainwater harvesting project that includes lining the existing stormwater retention ponds to collect and use that water.

PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Dennis Pantano, Regional Vice President of Waste Services of Florida in the north central Florida region, stated that they were a fully aggregated solid waste collection and disposal company and that they had three transfer stations in Central Florida, a regional landfill in Osceola County, and two recycling facilities in Sanford and one outside of Orlando. He reported that 95 percent of the waste they collected in Central Florida ended up in their own landfill in Osceola County. They were here to present options regarding waste management and look forward to working with the committee.

Mr. Fred Hawkins, Government Affairs/Marketing Manager for Waste Services, related that he just attended a meeting last Friday regarding water through myregion.org, and he commented that it was going to be a huge issue coming up sooner rather than later.

Mr. Binney clarified that their company had the franchise for the area that encompasses northeastern Lake County such as Sorrento and Pine Lakes and asked whether they take the residential trash from that area to Osceola County.

Mr. Pantano responded that they take the trash from that area to the Lake County landfill.

Mr. Binney mentioned that at the next meeting they would be discussing getting the refuse from the curb to the landfill, which would deal with the haulers, and he stated that if one of Waste Services' representatives could be present at the next meeting, it would be helpful to them.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Grier cited two studies that illustrated that a well-run curbside recycling program could be cost effective and less expensive per ton than solid waste collection and disposal, but a half-hearted program is going to be more expensive than refuse disposal. He pointed out that the only two things in their waste collection budget besides the energy that bring in money were their own recycling and selling off the recyclables for someone else to separate them.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Mr. Binney proposed that the next meeting scheduled for November 1 at 9:00 be held at the Agricultural Center rather than the BCC Chambers, as well as the subsequent meetings scheduled for November 15 at 9:00 a.m. and November 29 at 9:00 a.m. He reminded the committee that the annual report will be presented to the County Commission on December 7.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.